



Clinician's Guide for *PE Coach* iOS (Apple)



National
Center for
PTSD
Posttraumatic
Stress Disorder

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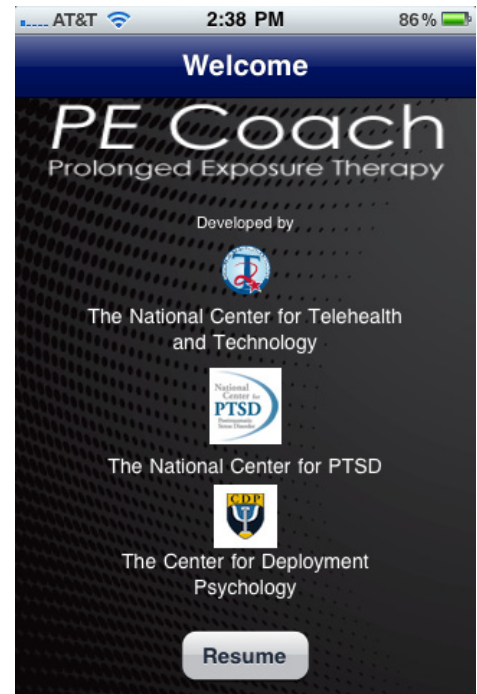
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Background on PE Coach

Prolonged exposure (PE) is an evidence-based psychotherapy for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) that has strong research evidence for its efficacy. Exposure therapy is a recommended treatment in PTSD clinical practice guidelines and PE is being disseminated broadly to Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and Department of Defense (DoD) behavioral health providers. However, patients and providers may encounter challenges as they seek to implement any new treatment. The PE Coach application (app) for mobile devices was designed to help mitigate these barriers and increase convenience for clinicians and patients. PE Coach may help to increase the rates with which providers use PE after training and improve adherence to the published treatment manual. The conveniences of PE Coach may also improve patient homework compliance and, as a result, improve treatment outcomes.

A prerequisite for successful use of this app is formal clinical training in PE. This guide assumes that clinicians already have received this training. This app does not provide training in PE and will not serve as an adequate substitute for it. Similarly, this is not a self-help app for patients.



The content of the PE Coach app was designed by a number of subject matter experts including those from the DoD National Center for Telehealth and Technology (T2), the VA National Center for PTSD, and the DoD Center for Deployment Psychology (CDP). In addition, the originators of PE, Drs. Barbara Rothbaum and Edna Foa contributed their invaluable expertise in the development of PE Coach. The published PE treatment manual and Patient Workbook corresponding to this app can be accessed and purchased at [Oxford University Press \(http://www.oup.com/us/companion.websites/0195308506/\)](http://www.oup.com/us/companion.websites/0195308506/).

PE Coach Installation

The app is designed to be installed on the patient's phone and is meant for use during each PE session with their therapist and after each session to support the patient's homework. Because the app is designed to be installed on the patient's device, therapists will need to ask their patient if they have an iOS (Apple) platform smartphone and, if so, if they would like to incorporate PE Coach as a tool to support treatment.

The iOS (Apple) platform PE Coach can be installed from [INSERT LINK](#). If you need assistance learning how to install an app, please see the manual for your device <http://support.apple.com/manuals/>

Organization of PE Coach

The main screen for the app lists the sessions by number. Once a session number is selected, the toolbar at the bottom of the screen divides the content into four options. Session "Tasks" are used during the PE session, "Record" is for audio recording of PE sessions, "Toolbox" provides options such as psychoeducational material from out of sequence PE sessions and administrative tools (i.e. therapist contact information, settings, and information about the app), and "Homework" links the user to the homework required between sessions.

The app content and capabilities progress logically and sequentially by treatment session to provide only the functionality that is required at each particular PE session. App tools relevant to the content covered in session 1 appear in the first session screen and tools relevant to the content covered in session 2 are not available until the session 2 screen is activated. In other words, the app serves as a coach by providing relevant app tools at the appropriate point in the protocol. Similarly, homework functionality is provided in accordance with homework assignments in the PE manual. The homework content available after each session corresponds to the homework required by the protocol.



Clinician's Guide for PE Coach iOS (Apple)



In clinical practice, content is sometimes needed out of sequence. For example, a clinician may revisit the rationale for conducting exposure during session 4. In the case that content is needed out of sequence, all psychoeducational materials in the app can be accessed through the “Toolbox” icon on the toolbar at the bottom of the screen.

Use of PE Coach with Patients

Discussing the Rationale for PE Coach with Patients

Using PE Coach requires discussing with your patient whether they would like to install an app on their phone to support therapy. There are several potentially appropriate times for this discussion. One such time would be after the clinical interview and collaborative treatment planning that resulted in the determination that the patient would participate in PE. A provider may describe PE Coach as follows:

“This program includes a number of activities that we will do in session together and activities that you will complete between sessions. A smartphone app is available to make some of these activities more convenient. For example, in this treatment, we audio record every session together. With this app, we can audio record directly onto your device. Also, you will use worksheets to record the homework you complete between sessions. With this app, you can complete these forms on-the-go as you complete the homework. I also like this app. It lets me know what homework you completed, and helps us track your improvement over time. It also gives you a built-in reminder for your next treatment session through the calendar on your phone. It doesn’t provide any treatment and won’t help you get better on your own but it might make our work together more convenient.”

Data Security

Security of personal information is an important concern for any information related to care. Discussing the security of information created and stored on the patient’s device is important. A provider may discuss these issues with a patient as follows:

“Any data created through the use of the PE Coach app is only as secure as your phone/device. You should use the security features on your device if you are concerned about the privacy of your information. iPhones have the capability to be password protected. The app also allows password protection. You are free to share data as you wish, but the data belongs to you. The app does not currently allow you to transmit the data electronically off your phone. HIPAA concerns do not apply while the data is stored or shared. When data is shared with me or another health care provider, then the provider you share it with must then comply with HIPAA rules.”

App password protection can be setup from any Session screen. Tap “toolbox”, “settings”, “customize your security settings”, and you can enter your PE Coach PIN.

Overview of the Content of PE Coach

This section briefly reviews all of the features and tools available in the PE Coach. The app is designed to be fairly intuitive to those trained in and experienced with the PE protocol. However, these descriptions may be helpful for quick familiarization or for clinician’s relatively new to PE. Note that the app has session content available for sessions 1-4. Additional sessions are added by tapping the “Add Session” button at the top, right of the PE Coach Sessions Screen. Regardless of the number of sessions completed, use the “Final Session” button to access the unique functionality available for the last session of PE.

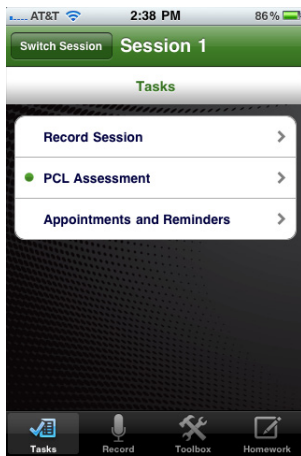
Session 1 Tasks

The “Session 1 Tasks” screen provides the ability to do 3 basic things:

1. Record Session – This button takes the user to a screen enabling audio recording. After starting the recording the



Clinician's Guide for PE Coach iOS (Apple)



user can press the back button to return to the “Session 1 Activities Screen”. Audio recording continues while other app functionality is used. However, if you leave the PE Coach app and return to the device home screen, recording will stop. At the end of the PE session, the user will need to return to the Record Session screen and stop the recording. The audio recording is automatically saved for review during homework.

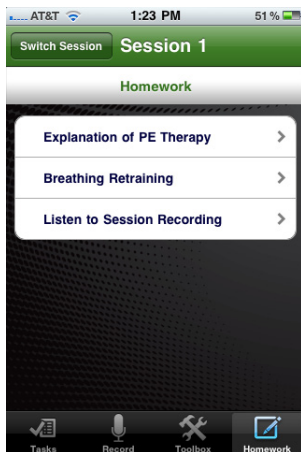
2. PTSD Checklist (PCL) – The PCL is available for administration and is repeated on the menus of every odd numbered session. After item responses are provided, “tap” the arrow key at the top, right of the screen. Once the final item is completed, the total score and individual item responses are displayed. Results of this PCL are saved and will be available later in the Final Session screen of the app to support assessment of progress in treatment.

3. Appointments and Reminders – When the patient and provider set the next PE appointment, the time and date of this session is entered into the app and this populates the device calendar. Calendar reminders can be set to help the patient remember and attend the scheduled appointment.

Session 1 Homework

To access the homework required after the first session of PE, tap the “Homework” icon on the toolbar at the bottom of the Session 1 Tasks screen. The app capabilities supporting Session 1 homework include:

1. Explanation of PE Therapy – All psychoeducation in PE Coach is presented in two formats. One is an audio-visual presentation of the content via a video. However, some individuals may not have a good network connection or may simply prefer to read this explanation instead of listen to it. A text version of all content is also provided.



2. Breathing Retraining – The breathing retraining homework in the app includes three parts.

- About Breathing – this part provides audio-visual or text presentation of the PE psychoeducation on breathing retraining.
- Breathing Retraining – provides audio-visual or text presentation of instructions on conducting breathing retraining.
- Practice Breathing Retraining – provides an audio-visual “coach” to guide the patient through the breathing retraining exercise. As the rate of breathing cannot be adjusted, this animation is an illustration of the skill. The user will have to modify their rate according to their individual needs.

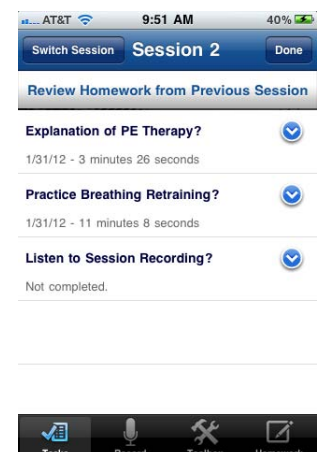
3. Listen to Session Recording – This screen allows the patient to listen to the audio recording made during the first PE session.

Session 2 Tasks

The app capabilities supporting Session 2 of PE include:

1. Record Session

2. Review Homework from Previous Session – This screen provides the patient and provider with information about homework compliance. App usage for each homework part is displayed on this screen. For example, once the user accesses the session 1 homework screen “Explanation of PE Therapy”, a timer records the interval until they exit this screen. Accordingly, the time the patient spent with either the text or video options is available during Session 2. This information can help support discussions about barriers to homework completion and problem solving, when necessary.





Clinician's Guide for PE Coach iOS (Apple)



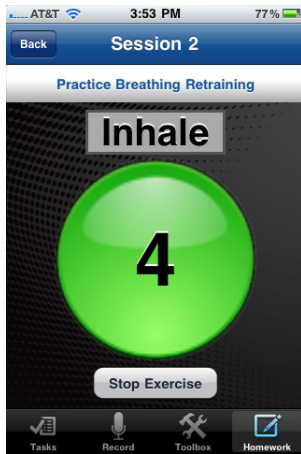
3. Create In Vivo Hierarchy and SUDS Ratings – In session, the patient and provider can create the in vivo hierarchy directly in the PE Coach app. The advantage of doing so is that the patient will have hip-pocket access to the hierarchy, can add new items as they are identified on-the-go, and the app can populate future in vivo homework assignments with selected in vivo hierarchy items. As the app does not currently allow transfer of data, the clinician may wish to record a paper copy of the in vivo hierarchy for their records as well. After each item is added and the SUDS is entered, press “save”. When the list is complete, press “Done” to return to the Session 2 Tasks screen.

4. Choose In Vivo Assignment for Homework – The in vivo hierarchy is brought up and the clinician and patient collaboratively select the items from the list for in vivo exposure homework. Items are selected by tapping the desired item. A checkbox will appear. These items will then populate the Session 2 in vivo homework screen of the app.

5. Appointments and Reminders

Session 2 Homework

The activities supporting Session 2 Homework of PE include:



1. Common Reactions to Trauma – Audio-visual or text psychoeducation is provided for common reactions to trauma. For the audio-visual option, users can either view all common reactions or select specific categories of common reactions.

2. Add to In Vivo Hierarchy – This brings up the previously created in vivo hierarchy and provides the opportunity to add newly identified items.

3. Choose In Vivo Exposure Assignment – The items selected during session 2 for in vivo homework populate this screen. The patient can select the item with which they are about to do exposure. They then are given the opportunity to enter pre, post, and peak SUDS, which are stored by the app for referencing later.

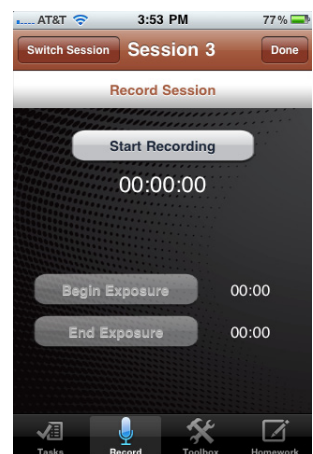
4. Breathing Retraining

5. Listen to Session Recording

Session 3 Tasks

The app capabilities supporting Session 3 of PE include:

1. Record Session – As session 3 is the first time imaginal exposure is conducted, the audio record functionality is modified from session 3 forward. Specifically, the user begins recording at the start of every session. At the point in the session at which imaginal exposure begins, the user taps the “Begin Exposure” button. Doing so will turn the “Begin Exposure” button dark grey and creates a new audio track that can later be used when the patient is listening to the imaginal exposure recording during homework (see session 3 Homework below). Similarly at the end of imaginal exposure, the patient presses the “End Exposure” button again to terminate the imaginal exposure audio track but continue the full audio recording track. At the end of the session, press the “Stop Recording” button to end the full session audio recording.





Clinician's Guide for PE Coach iOS (Apple)



2. PCL Assessment

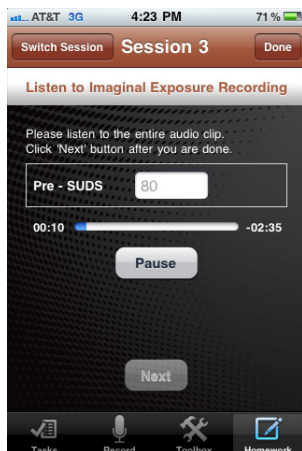
3. Review Homework from Previous Session – This screen provides the patient and provider with information about homework completed since the last session. Selecting an item provides additional information. “Review of Added In Vivo Items” launches the full in vivo hierarchy in order to collaboratively review items the patient added since the last session. “Review of In Vivo Homework” activates a screen showing what in vivo exercises were completed, the date and time the SUDS were entered in the app, and the pre, post, and peak SUDS for each exercise.

4. Choose In Vivo Assignment for Homework

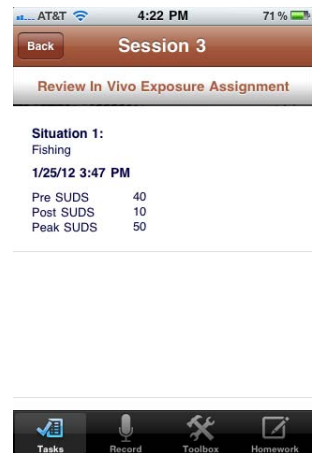
5. Appointments and Reminders

Session 3 Homework

The app capabilities for Session 3 Homework include:



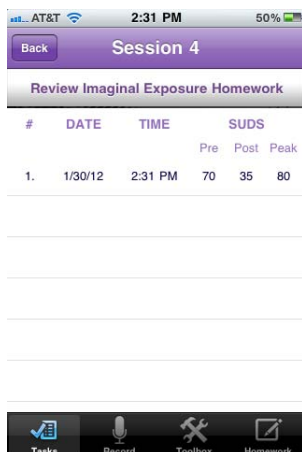
1. Add to In Vivo Hierarchy
2. Choose In Vivo Exposure Assignment
3. Breathing Retraining
4. Listen to Entire Session Recording



5. Listen to Imaginal Exposure Recording – This will play the audio recording of just the imaginal exposure portion of the previous session. When activated the patient will be prompted to immediately enter pre-exposure SUDS and is then allowed to start play back. When finished, the patient completes the post and peak SUDS.

Session 4 Tasks

The app capabilities supporting Session 4 of PE include:



1. Record Session
2. Review Homework from Previous Session – In addition to the previous capabilities to review homework completed on the app, the homework review now includes the amount of time spent listening to full session audio recording and the imaginal exposure recording.
3. Choose In Vivo Assignment for Homework
4. Appointments and Reminders

Session 4 Homework Until Final Session

Same as Session 3 Homework

Session 5 Tasks Until Final Session

Same as Session 4 Tasks

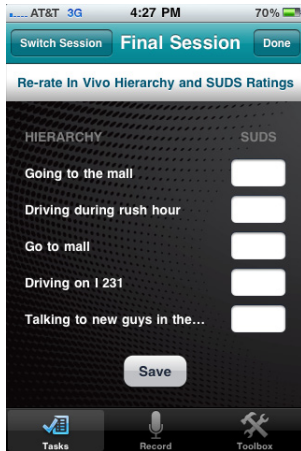


Clinician's Guide for *PE Coach* iOS (Apple)



Final Session

The Final Session of the app provides the functionality to:



1. Record Session

2. PCL Assessment

3. Compare all PCLs – The dates and total PCL scores for all PCLs taken during treatment are displayed in a table. If desired, individual PCL item lists with responses can be displayed by tapping on an individual PCL row.

3. Review Homework from Previous Session

4. Re-rate In Vivo Hierarchy and SUDS Ratings – The full in vivo hierarchy is displayed and the patient can re-rate their current SUDS for each item on the list.

5. Compare SUDS – The session 2 SUDS and Final Session SUDS are listed. This can support a discussion of progress made in treatment, as well as work that remains to be done. If a visual display of this comparison is desired, tap the “graph” button.

6. Listen to Session Recording

7. Complete Program – A congratulatory message is displayed. If the patient wishes to delete the data created by using PE Coach, tap Toolbox, Settings, and select “Reset User-entered Data”. Also, all PE Coach data, including audio recordings, are deleted when the app is uninstalled.

